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ABSTRACT

This report is the sixth and final report in a series designed to help states, local government, and the voluntary sector, as they respond to the social policy debates and changes precipitated by the 104th Congress through its welfare reform efforts. This final report draws on the lessons the project learned from commissioned papers, six consultations and miniconferences, and the work of experts and advocates for child welfare. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 has nine titles that drastically affect the shape of welfare in the United States. It is essential that welfare planners build on the new flexibility available to the states and address concerns about work-motivation and family formation to create programs that move in a constructive direction, assisting and supporting, rather than attacking, welfare recipients. It is vital that states, as they try to comply with new policy directions, not ignore the hard-to-serve, particularly those in the big cities. The discussion of the states at the center of the examination considers: (1) work policies and initiatives; (2) a multitrack welfare plan; (3) child care initiatives; (4) capacity to individualize and support; (5) diversion from welfare; (6) individual development accounts; and (7) avoiding big mistakes. The discussion of needed Federal initiatives and some state options focuses on legal immigrants, supplemental security income, and food stamps. Appendixes discuss the National Governors' Association plans and list participants in the miniconferences. (SLD)

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